

JOHNNY ARMSTRONG's Last Good-night.

Declaring how *Johnny Armstrong*, and his Eightscore Men, fought a bloody Battle with the Scotch King at Edinburgh. To a pretty Northern Tune.

Note, As the Use of these Old Songs is very great in respect that many Children who never would have learn'd to Read, had not they took a Delight in poring over Jane Shore or Robin Hood, &c. which has insensibly stole into them a Curiosity and Desire of Reading other the like Stories, till they have improv'd themselves more in a short time than perhaps they would have done in some Years at School: In order still to make them more useful, I premise to affix an Introduction, in which I shall point out what is Fact and what is Fiction in each Song; which will (as may be readily suppos'd) give not only Children, but Persons of more ripe Years, an Insight into the Reality, Intent and Design, as well as many times the Author and Time when such Song was made, which has not hitherto been explain'd.

Never was Country in the world more infested with Robbers than the Kingdom of Scotland in former Days. Some few Banditti we have had here in England, but compar'd to their Number they are few indeed; but as a general History of em would at present be foreign to my Purpose, I shall confine myself to the Heroe of the following Ballad, who liv'd near the River Ewse where he had a strong Body of Men under his Command, and all his Neighbours, even the nearest English, stood in awe of him, and paid him Tribute. When James the 5th reign'd in Scotland, and Henry VIII. in England, the former willing to suppress all Robberies, levied a small Army, march'd out against the Banditti, and pitch'd his Tents near the River Ewse. At this John Armstrong became sensible of his Danger, and would willingly have made his Peace. Some of the King's Officers finding him in this Disposition, secretly persuad'd him to make his Submission, adding, that they durst assure him he would be kindly receiv'd. Armstrong follow'd their Counsel, and with 60 Horsemen unarmed, hasten'd to the King, but imprudently forgot to furnish himself with Passes, and a safe Conduct. Those who had given him this Advice, sensible of his Error, lay in Ambush for, surpriz'd and took him, with his 60 Men, and carry'd em all to the King, pretending that they had made them Prisoners. Nor was he accus'd of robbing only, but of having also form'd a Design of delivering up all that Part of the Country to the English; and being condemn'd, he, with 54 of his Companions, was hang'd, the other 6 were reserv'd as Hostages to deter their Fellows from being guilty of the like Crime. Our Poet, I suppose, thought that the Gallows was too low a Death for his Heroe, and therefore rather chose to let him die bravely fighting. Instead of Three, he gives him a Retinue of Eightscore Men, and lays his Scene in Edinburgh, and these, I think, are the most material Points in which he differs from History.

Is there ever a Man in all Scotland,
From the highest Estate to the lowest Degree,
That can shew himself now before our King
Scotland is so full of Treachery?



Yes, there is a Man in Westmoreland,
And *Johnny Armstrong* they do him call,
He has no Lands nor Rents coming in,
Yet he keeps Eightscore Men within his Hall.

He has Horses and Harness for them all,
and goodly Steeds that be milk-white.
With their goodly Belts about their Necks,
with Hats and Feathers all alike.

The King he writes a loving Letter,
and with his own Hand so tenderly,
And hath sent it unto *Johnny Armstrong*,
to come and speak with him speedily.

When *John* he look'd this Letter upon,
he look'd as blith as a Bird in a Tree:
I never was before a King in my Life,
my Father, my Grandfather, nor none of us three

But seeing we must go before the King,
Lord, we will go most gallantly;
Ye shall have every one a Velvet Coat,
laid down with golden Laces three.

And every one shall have a Scarlet Cloak,
laid down with Silver Laces five,
With your golden Belts about your Necks,
with Hats and Feathers all alike.

But when *Johnny* went from Giltnock-Hall,
the Wind it blew hard, and full fast it did rain,
Now fare thee well, thou Giltnock Hall,
I fear I shall never see thee again.

Now *Johnny* he is to Edinboroug'b gone,
with his eightscore Men so gallantly,
And every one of them on a milk-white Steed,
with their Bucklers and Swords hanging to their
(Knees).

But when *John* came the King before,
with his eightscore Men so gallant to see;
The King he mov'd his Bonnet to him,
he thought he had been a King as well as he.

O Pardon, pardon, my Sovereign Liege,
Pardon for my eightscore Men and me;
For my Name it is *Johnny Armstrong*,
and a Subject of yours, my Liege, said he.

Away with thee, thou false Traytor,
no Pardon will I grant to thee,
But to Morrow Morning, by Eight of the Clock,
I will hang up thy eightscore Men and thee.

Then *Johnny* look'd over his Left Shoulder,
and to his merry Men thus said he,
I have asked Grace of a gracklef Face,
no Pardon there is for you and me.

Then *John* pull'd out his good broad Sword,
that was made of the Mettle so free,
Had not the King moved his Foot as he did,
John had taken his Head from his fair Body.

Come follow me, my merry Men all,
we will scorn one Foot for to fly,
It shall never be said we were hang'd like Dogs,
we will fight it out most manfully.

Then they fought on like Champions bold,
for their Hearts were sturdy, stout and free,
Till they had kill'd all the King's good Guard,
there were none left alive but one, two or three.

But then rose up all Edinboroug'b,
they rose up by Thousands three,
A cowardly Scot came *John* behind,
and run him through the fair Body.

Said *John*, Fight on my merry Men all,
I am a little wounded, but am not slain,
I will lay me down and bleed a while,
then I'll rise and fight with you again.

Then they fought on like mad Men all,
'till many a Man lay dead on the Plain,
For they were resolved before they would yield,
that every Man would there be slain.

So there they fought courageously,
'till most of them lay dead there and slain,
But little *Musgrave*, that was his Foot Page,
with his bonny Griffel got away unta'n.

But when he came to Giltnock-Hall,
the Lady spy'd him presently,
What News, what News, thou little Foot Page,
what News from thy Master, and his Company?

My News is bad, Lady, he said,
which I do bring, as you may see,
My Master *Johnny Armstrong* is slain,
and all his gallant Company.

Yet thou art welcome home, my bonny Griffel,
full oft hast thou been fed with Corn and Hay,
But now thou shalt be fed with Bread and Wine,
and thy Sides shall be spurr'd no more, I say.

O then bespake his little Son,
as he sat on his Nurse's Knee,
If ever I live to be a Man,
my Father's Death reveng'd shall be.